

Class Struggle

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Fight for a ... Real Alternative To Fianna Fáil

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Public opinion polls shriek out at us that the standing of Charlie Haughey and the Fianna Fail government has never been higher; that in the event of another election 88% of the electorate would vote for one of the three major conservative parties. And this in spite of 240,000 on the dole, their onslaught on the living standards of the working class, their attacks upon the social and public welfare of the old and the sick; in spite of the mass emigration of the young; and in spite of their naked collaboration with Maggie Thatcher's brutal policies in the North.

The middle class pundits in the bourgeois media are only too delighted to see in all of this confirmation of their cynical beliefs that the Irish working class are irredeemably conservative and backward, hapless victims of an

undoubtedly corrupt system but utterly incapable of anything other than mindlessly swallowing the lying caricatures of reality peddled by Haughey and his cronies.

But such a view is not restricted to the transparently self serving pundits of the bourgeois media who need little extra incentive as apologists for the ugly reality of present day capitalist Ireland. Throughout the trade union and labour movement and among many serious rank and file workers some version of this view is constantly heard when anyone, like the Irish Workers Group, argues for building a rank and file fightback in the unions, the workplaces, in the communities and among the young.

The IWG completely rejects this pessimism for the anti-working class poison that it is. For the truth of the matter is otherwise. If big

sections of Irish workers continue to support or vote for Fianna Fail it is not because they are ignorant dupes. It is because they are not being offered a real concrete working class, socialist alternative, an alternative to the priorities of the capitalist system and the "crumbs from the table" tradition that has typified Fianna Fail's record whenever they have been in office.

ALLIANCES

The fight to build such an alternative would have to be absolutely clear about the real reasons behind Fianna Fail's "popularity". There is no mystery to it. It flows precisely from the fact that in a country dominated by imperialism and with an impoverished and stunted party of reform, the Irish Labour Party and the swollen and privileged layer of fat cats who make up the Irish trade union bureaucracy have been forced again and again to

seek alliances with one or other of the ruling class parties — alliances that are the guarantor of their own survival as a privileged and parasitic growth within the working class.

Fianna Fail with its programme of "national development", its nauseating hosannas and rhetoric to the goals of "national recovery" provide an ideal cover for the union and Labour bureaucrats' own bogus schemes and illusions about expanding the economy within the confines of the capitalist system.

In the face of mounting ruling class attacks upon the working class and the inevitable resistance, the bureaucrats fear with their lives the possibility of open class war breaking out. In the "national interest" they plead for the ruling class to allow them to fulfil their responsible role as social partner. "Let us police the work-force" is their mes-

sage to Fianna Fail. "We will ensure that there is no all-out resistance. We will ensure that struggles are isolated and left leaderless". In return, they ask, let the trade union movement be seen to be playing its responsible part with its feet under the table in administering the Programme for National Recovery (and incidentally get our snouts in the trough).

The bureaucrats have once more been successful so far in delivering bound and gagged the working class movement in order to cement their own place in bourgeois society. Any fightback, therefore, must begin with the recognition that the organization and mobilization of the rank and file is an urgent necessity on all fronts of struggle with no illusions whatever in any of the bureaucracy, left or right.

Breaking the Pact with Haughey must be made a key
▼ Bureaucrats Merging.

task of all rank and file struggle in the unions. Force the bureaucrats to mobilize the resources of the whole movement to defend the fast disappearing gains of the past thirty years of struggle. Our fight must be guided by the rule — "with the leaders where possible, against them where necessary". Fight for:

- A rank and file movement of trade unionists, mobilizing the working class communities against all aspects of the capitalist offensive, against women's oppression and against all forms of state repression.
- Transform the trade unions into a movement of class struggle in which a revolutionary political alternative can be built, a mass working class party that can lead the struggle to put an end to capitalist exploitation and oppression. ■

PHOTO BY DEREK SPEIRS/REPORT



SIPTU: Stop the Postal Ballot!

An explosion of anger and disbelief greeted Tom Garry (above right), president of the FWU when he addressed the AGM of Branch 15, one of the most vocal and political in his union, on the question of the SIPTU merger, on March 1st.

Despite trying to evade the issue he was forced to concede that the membership would at no stage have any possibility whatever of amending any part of the new rule book which the bureaucrats have put together for the new union.

He repeatedly promised "the fullest discussion" of the merger at

a special delegate conference on April 18th but insisted that the delegates to that conference could not put any amendments or motions! Meanwhile the details of the rules were still undisclosed to the membership!

He reluctantly confirmed also that after the merger a two-thirds majority would be needed for any change in rules — an impossibility for any proposal which the bureaucrats themselves were not pushing.

When IWG member Jim Laragy proposed a motion to the meeting to call for the new rules to be submitted to the membership

for debate and amendment by democratic conference, Garry personally intervened to tell the AGM — the supreme and only authoritative organ of the rank and file in the union — that he was not allowing them to discuss it, that it was "out of order". The branch chair, Terry Eagleton accepted Garry's interference as valid and disallowed a procedural motion to have the issue discussed.

The FWU and ITGWU will now put the merger to a national postal ballot — to take or leave the whole package! This is an unprecedented procedure that completely destroys the ability of organized

workers to collectively debate and decide on important issues independently of the pressure of the capitalist media.

This frontal attack on every norm of democracy in the working class movement is designed to impose an unchallengeable new structure that will divide the whole national movement into separate regional bodies, each committed, according to Garry, to the "economic development of the regions". That can only further weaken our fighting strength and deepen trade union collaboration with the plans of the Irish bourgeoisie for "development".

Workplace groups and branches must urgently come out in open opposition to this massive confidence trick. Emergency meetings, forceful resolutions, public statements, and if necessary the organized boycott of the postal ballot must be fought for to win elementary democratic procedures on this fundamental issue for Irish trade unionists.

- No faith in Garry, Carroll, Attley!
- Stop the Postal Ballot!
- For the rank and file alone to decide the new rules at democratic conferences and a joint conference of FWU & ITGWU!

EDITORIAL

John Mitchell Sells Out

The decision by John Mitchell to come to "an amicable settlement" with the IDATU executive on Monday 13 February in the high court cannot be described as other than an act of treachery against the campaign that he himself had called for against his summary dismissal from IDATU in November '88.

Mitchell had been dismissed as General Secretary because his militant trade union methods and his criticism of the ICTU leadership on the issue of the North were intolerable to the right wing who dominate the IDATU executive. They had also closed down two new branches in Belfast and Derry, both established as a result of Mitchell's initiative.

The campaign launched to re-instate him was initially pledged the support of three union officials, John Daly (Cork), Brian Higgins (Limerick) and Brendan Archbold in Dublin. It involved in active campaigning some of the most combative shop stewards and rank and file militants in IDATU. The campaign also attempted to win support from other union militants, as well as having the active involvement of many in the republican and revolutionary socialist left in Ireland. The campaign called for Mitchell's re-instatement and the restoration of the two northern branches and was set to bring the issue onto the floor of the IDATU national conference in April.

The campaign therefore raised as a matter of principle the burning issue of the bureaucratic control not only of IDATU but of the trade union movement as a whole. As such, it represents a modest but nonetheless vital and long overdue initiative in the fight to build a rank and file movement. At a time when the ICTU shamelessly and flagrantly support Haughey's Programme for National Recovery, support which has given licence and cover to his government's criminal attack upon the living standards of the working class, the poor and the sick, the Mitchell campaign offered some hope of laying the basis for a fightback. For without a fight to transform our unions into democratic organs of class struggle we have no chance of offering serious resistance to the employers and the capitalist system in Ireland.

Statements of support came from several trade union federations in oppressed countries with which Mitchell had established union links. Sections of workers in other unions for whom he had worked also spoke out as did P.J. Madden, head of the Nurses Organisation. IWG supporters got the unanimous support of one workplace of 50 ITGWU construction workers for a letter of protest to IDATU and also tabled a resolution in his defence at a public service union branch which had to be withdrawn after his sell out.

At the campaign committee meeting on the 11 February it had become clear that the bureaucrats of the union were stepping up their campaign of lies and intimidation. This led to the cowardly defection of Mitchell's erstwhile comrades union officials Daly and Higgins, both under threat from the executive. The larger IDATU branches in Cork, Limerick and Waterford were lost as a result. The bureaucrats had bussed in many who had never been to a union meeting. At the largest Dublin branch Mitchell's supporters were mobilized in force but the platform hacks Marie Hayde & Co. denied them the right to put a motion or speak in Mitchell's defence. Their action forced the other union official—Brendan Archbold—to speak out in support of Mitchell, but the platform railroaded a motion of confidence in the Executive.

While the outcome of the issue at the national conference at Easter would never have been in doubt, the continuation of the campaign up to the conference was a vital necessity. It would have signalled that a start had been made and would continue. But it was clear from Mitchell's contribution that he was backing off. He claimed that to continue the

struggle in the face of inevitable defeat would be to lead to further demoralisation and that he believed that it was necessary to withdraw resolutions in his support even where they were likely to be carried, in Dundalk etc. and not take the fight to the conference. He refused to use his own residual right to attend the administrative branch of the union to argue in his own defence. Better, he claimed, to fight instead on the general issue of trade union democracy as the basis of the campaign. Two days later the media announced his acceptance of a large sum which he agreed not to disclose, paid by the union out of the member's funds.

Following February 13th, Mitchell's explanations for his actions amounted to no more than a restatement of the defeatist arguments of the previous meeting. He stated that he hadn't known of any offer from his union until he appeared in court and as he had to live it was necessary to accept. Furthermore he had not lost his job, he said, "for the sake of a campaign for politicians to latch onto, politicians who think causes more important than people".

The IWG are well aware that John Mitchell's dismissal from his job was a major blow to his livelihood. No one for a second underestimates the situation he and his family were placed in, and the real possibility that he might never work again. We recognise too the real pressures that he was under, especially as the campaign had little hope of securing his re-instatement. We accept that retreats and compromises are inevitable but necessary steps in the class struggle.

But, as we have argued before, in relation to SWM members accepting injunctions, that the criteria for making assessments and judgments about when and how to retreat must be when the struggle has been waged up to the point where all opportunities and avenues for further advance have been completely exhausted. It is only then that a balance sheet, democratically discussed and debated, can be realistically drawn and the decision to compromise and retreat seriously considered. This is the only principled way to both practically learn the vital lessons, retain the human and material resources which are necessary if we are to continue, despite the setbacks. This is the only way of ensuring that the causes we fight for can be built, not at the expense of people, but as the means of holding those we have and winning others to our side. Anything else can only result in demoralisation, division and cynicism.

By these criteria, Mitchell's reasons are no more than a transparent attempt to hide a betrayal of the very issues at the heart of the campaign. The IWG do not know whether Mitchell had prior knowledge of the offer. If he had, then his actions are a conscious and calculated act of treachery — if he didn't, his decision still amounts to a shameful sellout, all the more so from someone who has regularly paraded his conscience as a defender of the principled struggle of the republican movement, the ANC etc. Moreover, Mitchell has claimed to be a revolutionary socialist and has involved himself in attempts to build a mass socialist party of the working class. He knows more than most that that struggle demands from all of us sacrifice in the defence of principles. Mitchell's turn has come and he ducked it.

The IWG has in the past criticised Mitchell's politics and methods as stemming from his position as a left trade union bureaucrat. He has never demonstrated any record of recognising the centrality of the fight for the building of a rank and file movement and the open democratic methods so crucial in such a struggle. We believe his action confirms everything we have said. John Mitchell's role as a serious fighter against exploitation and oppression on this island is in serious question.

What is not in question is the urgent need for the campaign for a democratic rank and file movement to be built and to continue, with or without him.

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Republican Talkshop Blocks Action Proposal

At Sinn Féin's Ard Fheis Gerry Adams called for the building of a mass 32 county anti-imperialist movement against the presence of British imperialism and the ruling clique in the south who represented the interests of British and multi-national capital in Ireland. Fine words. For anyone fool enough to believe that this meant the launching of a campaign of action and struggle against all and every aspect of exploitation and oppression in Ireland, the "private meeting" of specially invited people to the Clarence Hotel on February 18 would soon have convinced them otherwise.

For Sinn Féin and their supporters proposed, as the basis for an anti-imperialist movement, a series of "conferences and political dialogues" explicitly aimed at nationalist writers, feminists, cultural activists, libertarian and radical lawyers, progressive clergy "discussing the quality of life and where the state has failed", community activists, trade unionists etc. This strategy, an affront to call it such, was based upon an "analysis" by Sinn Féin that all of the social, economic and political ills of the exploited masses in Ireland are the result of national oppression. Therefore, they conclude, behind the slogan of national self determination and the Democratic Programme of the first Dáil, the successful mobilisation can ultimately take place. But what of the conferences and dialogues with the poets, songwriters, playwrights, clapped out Fianna Failers and yesterday's socialists? These, it was argued by Jim Gibney of

Sinn Féin, were a necessary pre-condition to win new forces before any concrete proposals for action of the oppressed and the exploited could be called for.

As against this bubble of republican fantasy, the IWG and the SWM put forward an alternative framework for building a campaign. It stated *That our primary aim be an all-Ireland campaign of action to win as its general goal British Troops Out of Ireland Now, and the disbandment of all the security forces of the sectarian Six County state. That this campaign be built by mobilizing mass action in a united movement around all the different concrete issues of repression, including the demands for the abolition of all emergency laws, special courts and censorship etc. North and South. That the precise basis of the campaign, its demands and the social forces to which it will address itself should be democratically debated and decided by resolutions at a more representative open national conference of delegates from political, trade union, social and cultural organisations committed to struggle for the general goal of the movement.*

The IWG would argue at such a conference to base the fight against oppression centrally upon the organized working class and the fight for its industrial action against every aspect of repression. We argue for such a struggle to be taken up in combination with working class resistance on all fronts against the capital-

ist offensive north and south.

This perspective for action flows directly from the stark class reality of exploitation of the Irish working class and north and south. Unless we fight to link the oppression of the minority in the north and repression by the Southern state to the social and economic attacks upon the living standards of the working class on this island by Thatcher and Haughey, no serious campaign will ever get off the ground.

The nationalist talk shop proposed by Sinn Féin amounts to no more than a diversion from that reality. Realizing the anti-imperialist struggle needs the support of the southern masses to break out of its isolation, they nevertheless refuse to appeal to the class interests of the southern workers. They insist that first the southern masses must be won to Sinn Féin's nationalist perspectives. Sinn Féin as a nationalist movement is unable to face head-on the politics of class struggle.

The IWG/SWM resolution along with Sinn Féin's was passed. In reality, the resolutions were not mutually exclusive as nothing in the IWG/SWM resolution precluded Sinn Féin's wish to have a series of talk-ins. But Sinn Féin's Jim Gibney underlined the republican movement's preference for a non-stop conference of windbags and on a vote to decide which perspective would be accepted the vote went Sinn Féin's way. As one delegate ruefully remarked as she left "that's probably the last we'll see of this campaign". ■

ANTI-FASCIST CONFERENCE IN GERMANY

The growing strength of fascist and neo-fascist organizations in West Germany shown by the recent success of the Republican Party in the Berlin city elections, where they won 7.5% of the vote, demonstrates the importance of building an effective anti-fascist campaign. A big step towards this could have been taken at the national Action Conference Against Neo-fascism and Racism, held in Bremen on the same weekend as the Berlin elections.

The conference attracted over 800 people and a wide range of organizations. This showed the mounting awareness of the importance of opposing the fascists but also ensured considerable differences over the strategy to be employed against them. For example, the various Stalinist-influenced parties and groups, the Volksfront, German Communist Party and Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany all favoured a rigorous enforcement of the constitutional ban on fascist organizations while the Greens opposed this because it would confirm the supporters of the fascist groups in their opposition to democracy!

The Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM) the West German section of the MRCI, who participated in the conference opposed any reliance on the state to ban fascists. It pointed to the way such bans in the past had actually been used to gag the left while the right continued to receive tacit protection. Against such a strategy, the GAM concentrated on the need for effective



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measures to prevent the fascists from mobilizing, to protect their potential victims, especially in immigrant communities, by self defence groups and the formation of a united front of groups committed to stopping the fascists.

In the end the conference committed itself to a combination of empty slogans—"Together against neo-fascism and racism"—and ill-defined actions. Everything about the conference and the movement around it underlined the importance of the continued intervention of the GAM in this milieu to win anti-fascists, not only to effective anti-fascist action but to the only political strategy that can eradicate the soil in which fascism grows, the strategy of socialist revolution. ■

ARRESTS IN PERU

HUGO BLANCO, a well known socialist and leader of peasants' organisations in Peru has been seized by police and charged with armed subversion. Blanco was arrested on 9 February during a police onslaught on a strike of the peasant organisation of Huacall. Blanco, along with 200 peasants are being held in Pulcaipa prison. Urgent letters/telegrams from trade unions and labour movement organisations protesting the arrests and demanding their release should be sent to: Alan García, Presidente de la República, Palacio de Gobierno, Plaza de Armas, Lima, Peru.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S day has come again without too much cause for celebration despite nearly two decades of women's liberation movements and campaigns in Ireland. The vast majority of women still face into lives of daily drudgery either as unpaid slaves in the home or as poorly paid or low status workers. Little has been gained to establish their rights of personal and sexual independence. Major setbacks have been suffered on abortion and divorce. Church and state continue their incestuous alliance in denying democratic rights to the mass of women.

Indeed the economic offensive against the working class as a whole, and the growing apparatus of state repression aimed against the Republican struggle, have multiplied the adversities of women in the most exploited and oppressed sections of Irish society north and south.

New answers needed

There is more than ever now an urgent need for women to come together in a determined struggle against all the specific forms of oppression under which they live. In deciding what forces can lead such a struggle we must look beyond the failed leaderships and strategies put forward by the feminists of yesteryear. Apart from those cynically making a career out of their past notoriety as feminists, many former activists have sunk into the quagmire of Labour and Workers Party politics, having drawn the conclusion that women will have to rely on Dáil Éireann to gradually improve their lot. Among those feminists who previously tailed Sinn Féin, many have entered its ranks only to subordinate women's issues to republican nationalism. Not only must labour wait on Sinn Féin, it seems women must too. Yet other feminist leaderships have immersed themselves in isolated, if well meaning, self-help organisations, enabling capitalism to incorporate them as underpaid and understaffed services to women who might otherwise have organised a fight for such services as real rights.

It is capitalism that maintains women's oppression. We've had enough of the feminist claptrap about how men are the real enemy and about how consciousness raising (at the expense of political struggle) will radically transform women's lives. If we wish to make any serious headway there is no escaping the conclusion that we will have to direct our efforts against the causes of women's oppression, the capitalist system and its powerful and wealthy backers.

Moreover, if the failed experience of the women's liberation movements is not to be repeated we must remember how the middle class and feminist leaders of these movements sidetracked women's struggles into blind alleys, demoralising activists and emasculating their campaigns by ignoring the central task of mobilising proletarian women.

As with society in general, women are divided into classes — the broad mass of working-

BUILD A WORKING CLASS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

class women and the prosperous layers of women from the upper classes whose economic status cushions them from the worst aspects of their oppression. Bourgeois women, insofar as they take up the fight for women's advancement have done so only to gain parity with their male counterparts. Between these two groups there can be no commonality of interest. That is why we reject the "women of all classes together" solutions which have proved tragically bankrupt down through the years and turn instead to the women of the exploited and oppressed classes.

Fight exploitation!

Against this bleak landscape and indeed despite all of the obstacles facing them, working women have continued as the only enduring focus for organised resistance in the most difficult of circumstances. Only recently, the contract cleaners, one of the most exploited sections of women workers, showed their determination to take on the bosses — before being sold out in a postal ballot. Women organized through their workplaces can become a powerful force, when moved into action against their enemies. Yet one of the major problems facing women today is precisely how to systematise these struggles so that their gains can be built upon and extended to all the issues of women's oppression in capitalist society.

As a system capitalism depends upon the oppression of women as well as the brutal exploitation of the working class as a whole. Under capitalism women's role is maintained as that of a 'reserve army' of unemployed on the one hand, or on the other, as cheap labour. Their employment status is kept as insecure as possible to keep general wage levels down and to weaken their ability to organize.

Against this the fight for equal pay for equal work must be made a central slogan among working women. There must be no reliance upon the myth of the Equal Pay Act introduced by the Coalition in the 1970s under directive from the EEC. Claims must be brought forward everywhere on this issue and struggles coordinated towards winning mass strike action to bridge the huge gap between average male and female earnings.

Even the sharpest trade union struggles are unlikely

to reach out to the mass of women outside social production — the domestic workers, the unemployed etc. We must consciously turn outwards to building action committees in the communities to link trade union-based campaigns and struggles to the wider forces of women in the working class. Such a movement must take on board the most burning demands facing the mass of non-working women — cuts in welfare services, housing, prices, unemployment, community facilities, contraception, divorce, abortion etc. — in both urban and rural small-farm communities.

Capitalist society oppresses women socially as well as economically. It has shaped

necessary to socialise the slave-work of domestic drudgery and 'caring' that is forced on women — including 24-hour community creches and nursery schools, and full unemployment benefits for women seeking work. A major issue linking organized workers and women isolated in housework and child rearing is the fight for a fully free and comprehensive national health service for all. Abolish all state subsidies to private medicine.

Lumbered as domestic slaves, women's participation in the workforce is less than half of what it should be, and they are often the first to be driven out in recessions. The fight for the right to work is therefore central to the needs of women in struggle. Support for all struggles against redundancy, for work-sharing without loss of pay, for the 35-hour week etc. must be crowned with the key demand for useful schemes of public work at trade union rates to create jobs for all who want work and to provide vital social services.

Transform the unions

But the key to laying foundations for such a movement of struggle lies with women in the trade unions, the defence organisations of our class. True, the unions have become discredited in the eyes of many workers as a result of the role played by reactionary and powerful bureaucrats who

their involvement in the first place. We have all experienced the offputting atmosphere of union branch meetings, where through a mesh of rules and regulations, the officials bureaucratically manoeuvre to establish their control. Is it any wonder that workers are disillusioned by these hostile environments which at times seem to have more in common with primitive rituals than with the realities of everyday life. It is by such methods that women are prevented from raising awkward questions or having a real say in their unions.

To prepare women to deal with the inevitable difficulties they will have to encounter in struggle, special forms of organisation are needed. They must fight for special provisions to ensure that women can participate in their workplace and branch organizations. In practice this means the right to caucus separately, reserved seats on union committees and executives, union meetings to be held at the workplace and in worktime, the provision of creche facilities, special training courses and so on.

For rank and file democracy

Of course, such forms of positive discrimination, while likely to increase the number of women elected to the leadership, will not by themselves lead to any automatic improvement in the condition of

women's economic issues in the narrow sense. All the major issues facing women must be taken up in the trade union and labour movement. Central to these are the fight for free and automatic divorce at the request of one partner, free and legal abortion on demand, fully comprehensive free contraception facilities and for secular sex education in all schools. The most ruthless separation of Church and State, especially in schools and hospitals, must be put before the whole movement as a major democratic demand in Ireland north and south.

The fight for democratic rights against repression in all its ugly forms, especially for the demands of the political prisoners, and for their release, is also of central and burning relevance to vast numbers of women in Ireland. This too must be placed squarely on the agenda of struggle to be taken up by women in the trade unions and in broader movements of struggle that rally women in the communities.

A perspective for advance

Such a mass movement of women in struggle must be built with a clear class character. The Irish Workers Group argues for the building of a *mass working class women's movement* which would be open to women of other classes only in so far as these entered actively into struggle. It would, however, concentrate its energies on organising working class women who, by virtue of their social and economic status, are the most dedicated and reliable fighters. No other kind women's movement can be built as a real fighting force. Through solidarising with other oppressed layers, through building unity on the basis of joint action, the movement would advance the cause of the working class as a whole.

The starting points for such a movement are to be found both in immediate campaigns around limited issues such as divorce, abortion information rights etc. and in the ongoing struggles of women in the unions. All such partial struggles must be given the goal and focus of building a class-wide movement of organised struggle by women. Without this, the partial gains of today, if possible at all, will be only temporary or localized and the confidence gained in particular struggles will not be built upon.

The successful fight for this perspective will certainly bring the mass movement into conflict with the bourgeois state as a whole. That is why we fight independently to build a united class mobilisation, and a revolutionary party, to overthrow capitalism and replace it with the organized power of the working class. Because of their double oppression and exploitation, women fighters will play a major role in building that movement of class struggle and the revolutionary party to lead it into power. Only on that basis can the material conditions of a new society be created in which the oppression of women can be finally erased. ■



▲ PHOTO BY DEREK SPEIRS/REPORT

have long ago made their peace with the bosses. In return for the containment of workers struggles, the bureaucrats have been rewarded with fat wage packets, jobs for life and the perks that come with their integration into the capitalist state. As mediators between the workers and the bosses, the first concern of the bureaucracy is to harmonise relations between these two antagonistic forces. Unwilling to bite the hand that feeds them, the trade union leaders will never lead a fight to overthrow capitalism. Neither are they immune from the sexist attitudes towards women workers which they share with many men in the trade union movement.

The bureaucracy's control of the labour movement must be challenged as a priority. However if women are to play an active role in the transformation of the unions, they will have to tackle those factors which discourage

women. As long as the unions are run undemocratically from above, female bureaucrats are no less likely to sell out than their male counterparts. The role of women officials in the cleaners strike, in IDATU, in NUPE, in the teachers' organizations etc. give us plenty of evidence of this. The bureaucrats' control must be challenged by building a *rank and file movement* within and across the unions to democratise these bodies and to make the leaders accountable to the members in struggle. A central task of such a movement must be to reach out to unorganized women workers in all sectors of the economy, especially the most isolated and exploited. A rank and file movement must mobilise the trades councils in, and force the union bureaucrats to put special resources into, a massive unionisation drive.

At the same time we must absolutely resist any attempt to organise only around

Militant's Trotskyist Past

All parties and tendencies of the Left in Ireland past and present (James Connolly and Larkin above all!) have taken their political ideology from established international currents and applied it to local conditions. Militant is no exception. Irish Militant emerged as one of a series of self-described "Marxist Tendencies" in the mass parties of labour or social-democracy (or in Greece and South Africa in parties which they claim to be working class parties).

But these tendencies have a common origin and tradition. Their distinctive politics and method were worked out by the founders of *Militant* in Britain whose relative success in the Labour Party enabled them to win and assist sympathizers to build similar groups in other Parties of the so-called Socialist International.

British *Militant* had its origins in the break-up of Trotsky's *World Party of Socialist Revolution* between 1948 and 1953 (the Fourth International). The International was confronted with the massive expansion of Stalinism into E. Europe and the overturn of capitalism in Yugoslavia and China, against all their expectations. They were confronted by the failure of the working class to carry through the revolution anywhere and by the re-

emergence instead of the reformist mass parties in conditions of capitalist recovery worldwide, built on the basis of 60 million slaughtered in the second imperialist war. At the same time the global conflicts between imperialism and the post-capitalist (Stalinist) states were rapidly sharpening, erupting into a war of imperialism against Korea and China.

Centrism

The Trotskyists, tragically, failed to analyse these events in a scientific way and were unable to re-focus their *Transitional Programme* for the new period. A catastrophist perspective was adopted — of imminent wars and revolutions worldwide. It seemed 'logical' that the tiny revolutionary forces should quickly get to work within the mass reformist parties which would soon be forced leftwards into revolutionary action. This new turn split the International, but those sections which opposed the new perspective equally failed to carry out the necessary critical analysis of its past mistakes.

Within a short period all the different fragments of the International had developed distinctive forms of *adaptation* to non-revolutionary

forces. Some trailed the social democratic parties or, in the anti-colonial struggles sowed illusions in nationalist forces. Others defended the Stalinist CPs as potentially progressive while another section buckled under the pressure of the Cold War and abandoned the Trotskyist defence of the USSR. As such, all these fragments of the former revolutionary communist movement ceased to be consistently *revolutionary* and fell into forms of political *centrism*, vacillating between their revolutionary aspirations and the non-revolutionary forces behind which they trailed.

Militant began as just such a *centrist* tendency. It arose in Britain from a split in the Revolutionary Communist Party which had been the British section of Trotsky's Fourth International. Soon after the split, under the leadership of Ted Grant, Militant entered the British Labour Party at the begin-

ning of the 1950's, not as a tactic to reach the most advanced workers at a particular moment but as a permanent strategy irrespective of political developments in the working class. It was this turn by Militant which has principally determined the evolution of their whole political outlook over 35 years.

Entryism or liquidation

Militant's liquidation into Labour was completely at odds with the *entry tactic* which Trotsky had argued for in France. There he had supported the *French Section of the Movement for the Fourth International* in entering the French Socialist Party (SFIO) in the mid 'thirties. He saw this tactic as possible only because of a temporary conjuncture where proletarian sections within the mass reformist party were turning towards revolutionary forms of struggle. Only in such special circumstances would

it be possible for revolutionary communists (Trotskyists) to *openly* raise their revolutionary internationalist banner as a pole of attraction for such workers *within* the reformist party, and only for a short time.

Trotsky outlined clear guidelines against political liquidation, and was determined to jettison the tactic at the moment it became a trap for revolutionaries — when it sacrificed the communist programme to the illusion of short term gains. Ted Grant, by contrast, defended long-term strategic entry in the British Labour Party. Thus the 'entry tactic' was transformed in the direction of total and strategic *absorption* into the reformist mass party. It no longer mattered whether the Labour Party was a focus for leftward movement among the most advanced workers. The day would come, predicted Grant and his supporters, when the masses would *inevitably* rally

to the Labour Party and TUC. In the meantime, the place for revolutionaries was to be firmly implanted in the Labour Party, waiting on these developments.

No longer actively and openly addressing class-conscious workers with the call to build a revolutionary party, Militant gradually tailored their propaganda to what was acceptable within the left of Labour. This was the basis on which they recruited and built their tendency — the belief that the Labour Party could actually be transformed so as to carry out all the key tasks of socialist revolution.

The programme of Marxism is: preserve the link between Labour and the Unions. End coalition now and fight for a Labour government to carry out the socialist transformation of Irish society. (What We Stand For by Dermot Connolly, Militant Irish monthly pamphlet, April 1984, p.11.) ■

Left Reformism dressed up as Marxism

THE POLITICS OF MILITANT

Abandoning Marxism

Militant's ritual appeals to "Marxism" grew more insistent as they increasingly distanced themselves from the fundamentals of the revolutionary communist tradition of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. Their strategic commitment to Labour parties soon led to the most decisive of all their shifts away from Marxism — their belief that socialism could come through parliament:

The struggle to establish a socialist Britain can be carried through in Parliament, backed up by the colossal power of the labour movement outside. (Militant International Review no.22 p.28)

Answering one of the witch-hunters, Bob Sewell clarifies the matter:

The idea put forward by Hodgson that we want to 'smash parliamentary democracy' is completely untrue. Unlike the sectarian grouplets on the fringe of the labour movement we have stressed that a socialist Britain can be accomplished through parliament, backed up by the mobilised power of the labour movement outside" (MIR no.33 p.9)

Contrast this with the theses of the Communist International on Communist Parties and Parliament:

[Communism] sets itself the task of destroying parliamentarianism. It follows from this that bourgeois state institu-

tions can be used only with the object of destroying them. This is the one and only way the question of their utilization can be posed (thesis 6)

Since the focal point of the struggle for state power lies outside parliament, the questions of proletarian dictatorship and the mass struggle for its realisation are, obviously, immeasurably more important than the question of how to use the parliamentary system. (Thesis 19)

Putting parliament at the centre of political strategy, even with the working class mobilised to "supplement" the Labour Party sooner or later leads to another major distortion of the communist method — to adapt to the *national* framework of the bourgeois parliamentary system. Militant showed the results of this adaptation to the British imperialist state when it refused to take the side of Argentina in the Malvinas War. In the climate of imperialist jingoism they found it more palatable to argue that — "A Labour Government ... would continue the war on socialist lines" (MIR, June '82 p.4). We shall see later how this adaptation combined with their *economism* to lead Militant into a thoroughly reactionary position on the nationalist revolt in Ireland.

One of the distinctive features of Militant's politics has

been its almost exclusively trade-union based view of social forces and its narrowly economic view of working class interests. Even the perspectives it argues have frequently misrepresented the Marxist analysis of capitalism and its crises. Its constant prognosis for the economy is that collapse and catastrophe are always around the corner. Nothing capitalism can do is

This is a generally false explanation (underconsumptionism) rejected by Marx but beloved by reformists. Recessionary wage cuts serve to increase the rate of exploitation and to put profitability and capital accumulation back on a new footing at working class expense. The reformist argument simply gives a gloss to the beatings of trade union brokers who prefer to argue

with "environmental" and "feminist" concerns do so only in order to destroy any commitment to the traditions of militancy which are rooted in economic struggle. Revolutionary communism, on the other hand, has always fought to lift the workers' organisations politically out of such narrow perspectives and to champion, with their organized weight and industrial

at the end of the document. Even this seems like a major advance compared with their extremely marginal treatment of the woman question for most of their 16 years publishing in the one European country where women's oppression is most sharply posed.

Historical process

Behind this threadbare economism stands a general method which *relies* upon the economic forces of history to lead the masses to the Labour Party, to put it in power with a "socialist" programme and to paralyse the bourgeoisie into inaction. Such a reliance on an "objective historical process" is the one fatal disease common to all the *centrist* organisations, in one guise or another.

When the stock market slumped in October 1987 Irish Militant carried an article by Ted Grant telling us once more of the imminent outbreak of revolutionary activity worldwide, and that ...

The inevitability of the complete transformation of the Labour parties and of the Socialist parties in Europe, possibly even the 'Communist' Party in France, in the next few years could force the ruling class to make concessions on a temporary basis. The 'left' leaders will be talking about socialism, about revolution. ... Now in Spain, in reality, the socialist revolution has begun. ... There will be revolutions in the underdeveloped world and revolutions in the West, that is inevitable. Every active worker must understand the situation in which



capable of restoring its profit rate, its ability to go on accumulating. Against wage cutting trends Militant repeatedly argued:

The contradiction of the system itself is exposed in these objectives, as a cut in living standards leads to a fall in demand and this in its turn leads to a fall in production and this adds yet again to the tendency to recession and slump. (Labour to Power, by John Throne, 1975, p.10).

that their 'advice' to the capitalists to keep up wage levels will be good for both classes, rather than mobilize workers in struggle for their needs.

Trade unionism, and by extension the Labour Party based upon it, have traditionally had a narrowly economic view of the concerns of workers. Militant has largely adapted to this throughout its existence. The right-wing "new realists" of today who claim to counterbalance this

muscle, issues of wider concern to the class, the oppressed, women, democratic rights, health etc.

Irish Militant's *What We Stand For* (1984) poses the tasks of socialists almost wholly in terms of the fight for an economic programme. The entire national question is reduced to the fight for workers' unity in a new labour party in the North, and the entire question of women's oppression is left to two paragraphs

Connolly, Marxism and Labour

Militant constantly reminds us that James Connolly founded the Irish Labour Party. He was a Marxist. Therefore Marxism is an indispensable part of the Labour Party tradition. This 'logical' syllogism is dished up again and again by Militant to justify their appeals to 'Marxism' and to prove that no witch-hunt can ever expel 'Marxism' from the Labour Party. The historical facts are very different.

James Connolly, indeed, argued for a mass party of the Irish working class and proposed the enabling motion at the ITUC in 1912. His political perspective, however, was for a parliamentary vehicle which, in the Home Rule Ireland which then seemed imminent, would be the passive political expression in parliament of a vigorous working class movement conducting the class struggle against capitalism. It was a very defective idea, indeed, of how the party should relate to the class in the struggle for socialism. (For a fuller analysis see part 7 of our series on Connolly's legacy, in *Class Struggle Journal* no.19 available from IWG, £1 p&p).

Not only was the party not built or its programme detailed in any way while Connolly lived, he himself never put forward a revolutionary action programme around which to build it. Revolutionary though he was in his own life, and anti-imperialist fighter in the manner of his death, the legacy of Connolly in the Labour Party is anything but revolutionary or Marxist. As the pas-

they find themselves, understand the processes taking place in the world, not to be put off by a victory of Thatcher, of Haughey, of Chirac or whoever else it might be in Europe, not to be put off by a conservative reaction, because that will prepare an even greater reaction on the part of the working class.

There is a world revolutionary process taking place simultaneously — a crisis in the underdeveloped world, a crisis in the Stalinist countries, and a crisis in the developed world also — an unprecedented situation in history which will prepare changes in the consciousness of the working class across the globe. (*Militant Irish Monthly*, Nov. 1987 pp7-8)

While, of course, there is an "objective historical process" capable of creating revolutionary impulses among the masses, it can solve none of the tasks of leadership. And without conscious leadership with the most combative and clear character humanly possible, no spontaneous upsurge, however gigantic, can guarantee to smash and replace the class rule of imperialist capitalism.

That is why the open fight for the international revolutionary party of the Leninist-Trotskyist kind is an indispensable part of all genuine struggle for socialism. Sixteen years spent, in the name of Trotsky, trying to turn the Irish Labour party into a substitute for that revolutionary instrument is a crime against the whole tradition of Lenin and Trotsky and a complete falsification of Marxism. ■

sive political expression of the trade union movement, Labour was actually organised as an election machine after 1918, as a party expressing the outlook of the trade union bureaucracy in the ITUC. It has never gone beyond those political limits despite all its temporary turns towards left rhetoric. "Marxism" or revolutionary politics have never been a defining element of Labour's politics at any stage.

Even the most collaborationist leaders in the labour and trade union movement have been allowed to claim the mantle of James Connolly while trampling on every revolutionary aspiration that he stood for.

The Contradictory Nature of Reformism

Militant's appeal to Connolly in the Labour Party is based on a myth that it is in some spiritual sense Connolly's party, no matter what ugly right-wing pro-capitalist forces may control it. This spirit is presumed to be embodied by the "rank and file" members of the Labour Party who are inevitably going to be pushed into conflict again and again with the pro-capitalist leadership, the usurpers. The hold of the leadership over the party is always "tenuous", easily vulnerable to a determined offensive by the rank and file which can for sure, some day, turn the party into the instrument of socialist 'transformation'.

Again, this is thoroughly false. It wrongly attempts to apply within a reformist party the methods which Lenin, the Comintern and Trotsky applied to the inherent conflict between masses of workers in struggle on the one side and the reformist leaderships on the other side. The Labour Party as a whole is an intrinsic part of the reformist leadership of the class. It does not have a reformist leadership on one side and a (potentially) revolutionary rank and file membership on the other. Unlike a trade union with its mass membership united solely to defend of their material conditions, labour party members are a self-selected group who offer themselves as a political leadership to the class on the basis of a complete perspective and outlook — the reformist programme of achieving a better life for all through protecting bourgeois democracy and winning reforms within capitalism. This reformist outlook is utterly hostile to revolutionary action against the capitalist system.

Of course there are tensions in the labour party between different currents, most of all between the more honest sections of the rank and file and the more corrupt and openly bourgeois parliamentary leadership and their hacks and union bureaucrats who operate their party machine. Their control over the machine has been demonstrated again and again, most powerfully when they turned a huge leftward surge in 1969 into its opposite within two years, with the aid of all the power of the bourgeois media.

The self-selected membership, the rank and file, however, share deeply in the common reformist outlook of the party. For revolutionaries to exploit these tensions within the reformist party means fighting in united-front struggles to pit the best elements of the membership against the leadership with the explicit aim of winning them to a revolutionary party and the ultimate break-up of the Labour Party and its hold over the workers' movement. Militant's perspectives in the party have nothing in common with this method. ■

FACED WITH the looming threat of expulsion from Labour, Militant has ever more stridently assured their readers that "Marxism cannot be expelled from Labour"! This kind of mystical self-consolation is a fundamental part of Militant's whole method. Repeatedly they peddle illusions in false friends and fake 'lefts' and promise inevitable victories in the reformist party. Repeatedly they are faced with defeats, setbacks and illusory gains. They can continue to peddle the same fake nostrums only by persuading their members that defeats are really moral victories, or will ultimately be seen as victories, however their intelligence might tell them otherwise.

Typical of this at a general level is Ted Grant's exhortation to workers, quoted above, "not to be put off by a conservative reaction, because that will prepare an even greater reaction on the part of the working class." Not true — unless a revolutionary leadership is built in a fight to break the existing reformist parties! Consistently through all of Militant's politics, the historical process will achieve what Lenin and Trotsky argued only a revolutionary party could accomplish as conscious tasks!

Labour Moves Left

Continuously during the past 16 years, while Labour's support declined as it collaborated more and more deeply with the ruling class, Militant repeatedly pronounced that the party was moving to the left "again". Such movements were measured against the position and policies of the party in 1969.

The Irish Labour Party's electoral support was highest in 1969, with 25% of the Dublin vote (17% nationally), after adopting its most "left-wing" policies ever — for nationalization of the banks and insurance, for separation of church and state, for state development agencies to create new industry and employment. These were not anti-capitalist policies. If fully carried out they would have left Irish capitalism intact, but it was a utopian pipe dream to believe that even these limited measures could be imposed on the Irish ruling class through parliamentary politics. The progressive elements in these policies could only have been won through mobilising mass struggle, and no such prospect was envisaged.

The 1969 policies, the promise of "socialism in the seventies", the determination to oppose coalition — all were swept aside by 1972 when Irish Militant began its publication. But from the very start Militant based its propaganda upon presenting those 1969 policies as "socialist". After the 1972 conference Militant already reported a leftward movement in the rhetoric of Labour leader Corish, architect of the treacherous turn back to coalition (Militant no.6, p.2). After the 1973 conference they told us there was a

growing realisation among the rank and file that the only way their living standards can be defended and increased is by the implementation of the socialist policies contained in the 1969 policy documents (No.17).

Sixteen years in Labour

Labour Moves Left

In 1975 Militant's John Throne in a major pamphlet *Labour to Power* gave a conducted tour through the 1969 programme trying to persuade Labour members that it was a charter for socialism, concluding:

Enormously favourable times lie ahead for the working class ... the Labour Party must break from the Coalition and take its place side by side with the trade unions and mobilise the working class and all the vital sections of Irish society in support of its programme for the socialist transformation of society (p.13)

In Feb. 1976, recognising that Labour's actual policies were those of the continuing coalition, Militant told us that "It will be the unions that will lead the struggle for alternative policies within the Party" (No.40) and re-assuring us that the real Party was the members, not the leaders: "At the very time when Labour TDs and ministers are most active in their attacks on the labour movement, the Party is becoming more determined to change the policies of these so-called leaders".

But in November they reported that the Party conference in Limerick threatened expulsion to the (non-Militant) lefts who associated with the CP and SFWP in a public alliance for some of the 1969 policies on development of natural resources (the self-styled *Left Alternative*). Yet we were reassured:

Even at Limerick the potential for a sharp turn to the left was illustrated in the 30% vote for anti-coalitionist Pat Carroll for the vice-Chair and the 292 votes for Sen. M.D.Higgins for chair.

Labour Moves Left

In 1977 the party leadership got away with de-selecting Liaison of the Left candidates, including Noel Browne. He and Matt Merrigan stood as independent labour candidates in Dublin in the June 1977 election which removed the Coalition from office. But Labour continued in coalition even on the opposition benches! Nevertheless Militant was assuring us:

The previous Coalition fell in 1957. Within three years of that the Labour Party's right wing leader, Norton, had resigned and the Party was pledged to never again take part in a capitalist coalition. A similar process will again take place now; but this time the new leftward movement will be telescoped. We will not have to wait three years for the Party to take an independent socialist stance. (No.55 p.5)

And, indeed in April 1978, without breaking from their continuing alliance with Fine Gael in opposition, the party conference tried to repair its

threadbare credentials with the working class by electing a left-talking opponent of coalition, Michael D.Higgins, as party Chairman. Militant announced in 1978 under the headline "Labour Moves Left" that Higgins' election and the resolutions passed for the nationalisation of the Commanding Heights of the economy, for workers unity in the North and for the right to contraception and divorce in the South, together show that Labour is once again moving to take up its Socialist policies.

In the end Higgins was cast

in Militant's welcome for the election of Emmet Stagg, the self-styled 'Labour Left' leader who has publicly squabbled with Dick Spring over the division of power within the party machine. Stagg was to be the one to initiate concrete moves leading to the imminent witch-hunt of Militant itself!

At the 1987 annual conference, with Labour out of Coalition, Spring recognized the disastrous electoral situation, under pressure from the unions. He adopted the posture of rebuilding the party with a perspective of electoral inde-



▲ Militant anti-coalition cartoon, 1985.

aside by the leadership after several years as the "conscience" of a party that steadily deepened its collaboration with the ruling class. For Labour entered two further coalition governments — 6 months in 1981 and three years from 1983-85. Indeed, as Labour was increasingly rejected at the polls it was to rely more and more upon the hod-carriers of Militant to preserve its organisation intact, in particular building up its youth section. Even though the party Leader Michael O'Leary decamped to the Fine Gael party, there was no backlash against either coalition or the continuance of O'Leary's collaborationist policies in the person of his apprentice and replacement as leader, Dick Spring.

Labour Moves Left

Militant's major political statement from this period *Socialism or Catastrophe* by John throne reassured us, however, in bold titles — "Labour Will Grow", "Labour Continues Left", "Socialist Policies Will Build Labour" and "The Fight Back Has Begun". Only self delusion, a bad memory and a rapid turnover of supporters can explain how Militant could continue in this vein while even the trade unions were threatening to disaffiliate from the party.

The final ironies of this whole method are to be seen

pendence for the foreseeable future. Militant greeted it — "Labour Party Moves left at historic conference" (No.156, Oct. 1987):

One would have to go back to 1970 to find a year and a conference of equal significance in the Labour Party. Then the Party decided to seek a Coalition government with Fine Gael ... Exactly the opposite process has now been set in motion. ...

A motion containing a radical socialist alternative to the economic crisis of capitalism was moved by another Militant supporter... for "the nationalisation of the banks and financial institutions and for a socialist plan of production to create the wealth necessary to overcome unemployment, emigration and poverty". This was carried overwhelmingly.

Labour Moves ...

Within a year the Spring leadership, in collusion with the "socialist" Stagg, had broken Militant's domination of Labour Youth. Spring launched a "new realist" economic programme embracing private enterprise, and stood down the democratically selected Militant candidate in Dublin West. With Stagg's help he initiated with a vengeance the witch-hunt threatened against Militant since 1984, with the aim of undermining all anti-coalition forces in the party!

Turning left indeed! ■

Militant in the Unions

The Irish trade unions with their strong traditions of militancy have been the most important arena in which socialists should have been struggling during the past 16 years — in the wage struggles, against redundancy and for working class action against repression and for democratic rights, especially against women's oppression. But, as the high rate of unofficial strikes has demonstrated throughout most of that period, it was among the rank and file, and against the bureaucracy of the unions that such struggle had to be waged.

For Militant, however, the Labour Party was central and the workers' struggles only supplementary. Of course their paper reported the struggles of the rank and file and their supporters walked the picket lines wherever such solidarity was possible. However, Militant refused to take up the fight to build an independent rank and file movement in and across the unions to fight against the capitalist offensive. As recently as October 1987 when a rank and file initiative was attempted by the far left groups against the *Programme for*

Economic Recovery, Militant went its own way with propaganda for workers to join the Labour Party. The fight against this class-wide collaboration was only narrowly lost for the want of a struggle which was entirely possible. Their opposition to the trade union bureaucracy has never gone beyond finger-wagging at their sell-outs. They built oppositional groups in the unions which were little more than election machines for their own preferred candidates for union committee positions. Parallel with the attempt to enlarge their

influence in Labour, they have sought positions in the unions on the basis of left phraseology. They believed that the inevitable surge forward of the working class would then put them at the head of a combined Labour and Trade Union mobilization for the parliamentary transformation of society along socialist lines. The "broad left" groupings thus built in several unions were never genuine movements of the rank and file based on independent struggle ready to break where necessary with the union leaders. ■

perialism and unionism.

While tens of thousands of workers as well as petit-bourgeois sections struggled openly in solidarity with the hunger-strikers in 1980-81 in strikes and demonstrations, Militant attacked such mobilisations as reactionary and sectarian and put forward its own alternative — for verbal declarations in favour of the prisoners demands, to be argued for in northern Trades Councils and in the British Labour Party! (Militant no. 93, May 1981). While 100,000 were marching against Thatcher's murder of Bobby Sands, Militant's front page condemned the fact that "sectarian organisations" had thereby achieved worldwide prominence. "We make no apology", they wrote, "for highlighting some of those class aspects of the situation which the capitalist papers of the world have failed to notice"; and the article went on to tell of civil servants organising a cam-

paign for a 10% wage increase and of protests against rent increases.

Militant's "Marxism" has no place for revolutionary communist tactics in Ireland towards the continuing national struggle — tactics which must include united fronts for action with non-working class forces. They refuse to see that the sectarian discrimination in the North is in fact *national oppression*. They reject the method of Trotskyism which seeks to put the working class at the head of that struggle, and to fight for its extension into a class revolution for a *workers state* in Ireland. They substitute an abstract appeal to unity with protestant workers who have not been broken from their alliance with the oppressor unionist regime. Yet even then they fail to offer to either the protestant or catholic working class any revolutionary action programme of class struggle. ■

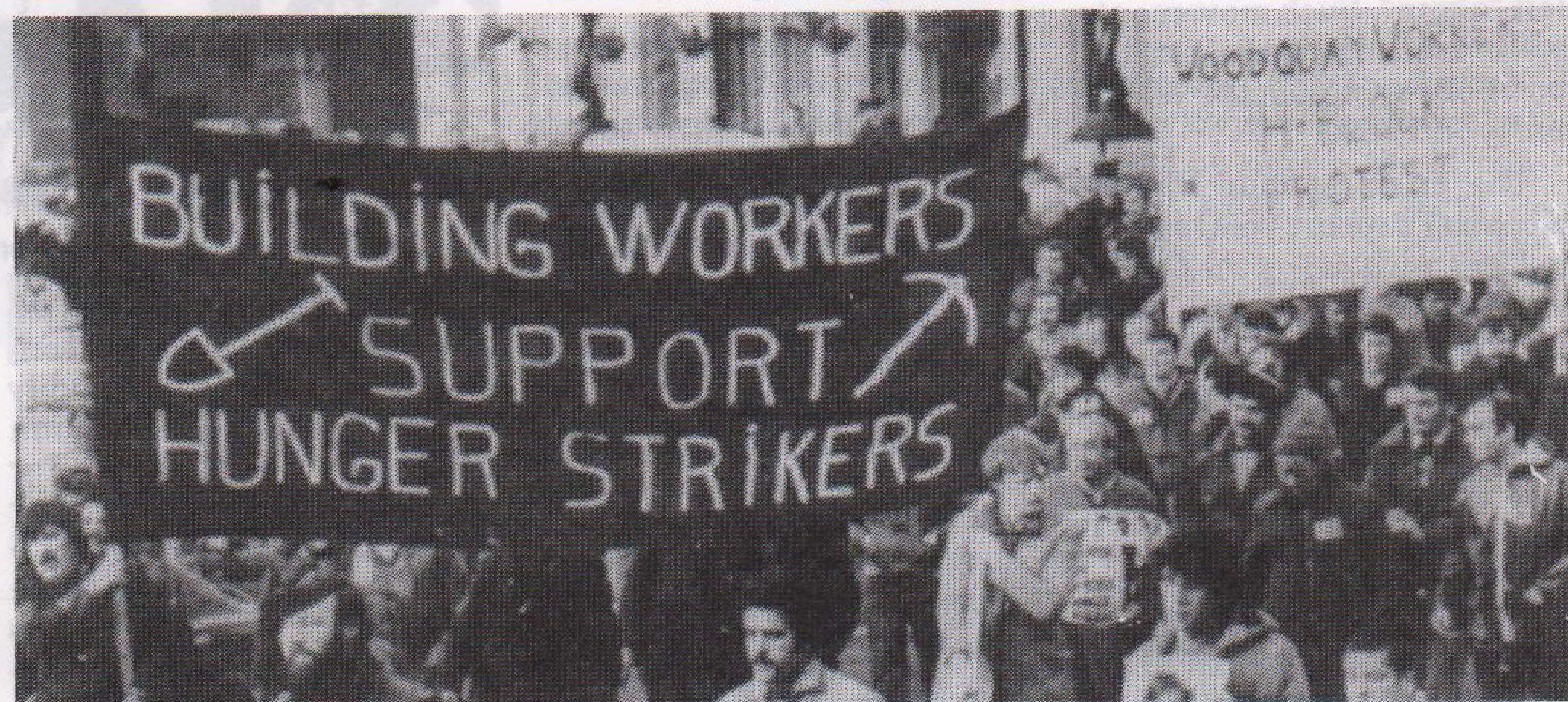
Militant and the North

While militant pledged itself at its inception in Ireland to fight British imperialism in Ireland, its uninterrupted 16-year record has been one of siding with reformist and pro-imperialist labour bureaucracies against the republican-led struggles of the nationally-oppressed.

Militant has never failed to emphasize in its propaganda the vital importance for the working class to fight all aspects of repression. But as long as that fight was actually waged under the leadership of non-working class forces Militant abstained and opposed it. It has taken refuge for 16 years in utopian and abstract calls for a united Protestant and Catholic trade union defence force in the North to "combat sectarianism". All the guerrilla actions of republican fighters were dismissed as sectarian individual terrorism. All the popular political mobilisations of the anti-unionists were attacked as sectarian. All the demands of anti-Unionists for justice and against repression were promised the support of Militant only if the anti-unionist masses would cease to struggle for them as Catholics

or as Nationalists and leave them to be fought for by resolutions for action by a future united labour movement!

This utterly reactionary side of Militant's politics was inherited from their mentors in Britain. In the first instance it reflected British Militant's own accommodation to the British state. It remained unchallenged throughout Irish Militant's subsequent indigenous development because the whole of their politics represented an adaptation to the official organs of the trade union and labour movements north and south, dominated as they were by the most open collaborators with British im-



The Acid Test for Trotskyism

Militant are accused by Dick Spring's gang of being part of an international organisation of Trotskyists dedicated to infiltrating the Labour Party. Yet, apart from a temporary existence after expulsion from social-democratic or labour parties, none of the Militant tendencies internationally has an independent existence. The international organisation which is most decisive in defining the politics of all these linked Militant tendencies is the *International movement of social democracy itself*, bound together by the rotten Socialist International of Dick Spring, Neil Kinnock, Mitterand etc., all members of the international reserve team of imperialist capitalism.

Within the framework of their common adaptation to social democratic reformism, all the Militant tendencies are undoubtedly co-ordinated, no more than Dick Spring and his cronies internationally co-ordinate their plans, including their attacks on groups such as Militant. On international issues they take guidance from the

leaders of the British tendency. Tragically, there is little or nothing in Militant politics, however, capable of ever counterposing the creation of alternative revolutionary parties.

Trotskyism, following in Lenin's footsteps, always puts to the fore in the most open way possible before the working class, the banner and programme of a *revolutionary international*. No matter what temporary entry tactics or other forms of united front that national sections of such a party may form with advanced workers in the reformist organisations, the open and independent existence and the programme of such an *international* are the touchstone of any claim to be part of the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky.

Militant's complete repudiation of this key task of Trotskyism and Leninism has its other side in open hostility towards what they call the "r-r-revolutionary sects" of the far left (No. 40, Feb '76) among which they include the Irish Workers Group. Yet it was the IWG which repeatedly confronted Mil-

litant with the need to take up Militant's defence as a campaign throughout the working class movement. It was the IWG that went ahead and moved motions in labour-affiliated trade union branches in defence of Militant when Militant would not do so. Militant's absurd response was that if anyone wanted to defend them they should give money to Militant, and they should join the Labour Party! If that is not sectarianism cutting off its own nose to spite its face...

Members of the Militant tendency must seriously question the record, the whole method, and the pseudo-Trotskyist claims of their leaders. If they do so honestly they must recognize that, whatever communist work may usefully be done among Labour Party members, the failure to openly fight to build a revolutionary alternative has been a disaster for the most combative class fighters.

If they are not to drift into political demoralization, like so many of their former comrades over the years, they must abandon the sectarianism in which they have been

trained and open up to debate and discussion among all those who claim to stand for the building of such a revolutionary alternative. In the IWG they will find the only tendency in Ireland committed to the pursuit of this goal by starting from the re-elaboration of Trotsky's programme as the basis for a new *revolutionary communist international*.

Far from cutting socialist fighters off from the working class, such a method will enable even an initially small organisation of politically trained cadres to intervene confidently in all the organisations of the class and on all fronts of struggle — among anti-imperialists, women fighters, youth, trade unionists and even the Labour Party. Only thus can we begin to raise the most advanced activists to the level of a coherent revolutionary programme instead of destroying their morale on the carousel of a Labour Party that can never do other than betray them, whatever the rhetoric about "transforming" capitalism out of existence.

Only the fight for such a revolutionary party can combine and develop the immediate and partial demands, and the episodic struggles, of the workers and oppressed into a *transitional* programme of permanent revolution against capitalism in Ireland and internationally. ■

WHERE WE STAND

THE IRISH WORKERS GROUP is a revolutionary communist organisation. We base our programme and policies on the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, on the documents of the first four congresses of the Third (Communist) International and on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

■ Revolution

Capitalism is an anarchic and crisis-ridden economic system based on production for profit. We are for its replacement by socialist production planned for human need. Only the working class can lead the oppressed masses of the planet towards this goal. To do so requires a social revolution that expropriates the capitalist class and smashes the armed power of that class, namely its state, replacing it with the dictatorship of the proletariat, founded upon workers councils and armed militias of the workers.

■ Reformists

There is no peaceful parliamentary road to socialism. Workers are repeatedly held back from the struggle for power by the social democratic or Labour parties, the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist parties. These bodies, while based on workers organisations, are bourgeois in their politics and practice. Their strategy of alliances with the bourgeoisie (popular fronts) inflicts enormous defeats on the working class worldwide. Their history is one of sacrificing the historic aims of the proletariat to reforms within capitalism. In periods of crisis, however, capitalism tries to recoup these concessions.

■ Transitional Programme

If the working class is to successfully fight the capitalist offensive, its own crisis of leadership must be resolved in a revolutionary direction. To this end we fight within the workers' movements to link existing struggles to the struggle for working class power. We fight for factory committees, industrial unions, international combine committees, unemployed organisations and councils of action — forms of organisation that can bring the workers united into conflict not only with individual capitalists but with the capitalist system. Through transitional demands the masses can find a bridge between their present struggles for everyday demands and the tasks of the socialist revolution.

■ Trade Unions

In the trade unions we fight for a rank and file movement to oust the reformist bureaucracy, to democratise the unions and win them to a revolutionary action programme based on transitional demands. Central to this is the fight for workers' control of production.

■ Stalinist States

The so-called 'communist' countries are in fact *degenerate workers states* ruled by Stalinist bureaucracies. Although capitalism has been overthrown the workers do not hold political power. Their planned economies remain fundamentally hampered by the existence of a privileged and parasitic bureaucratic caste, thus blocking the road towards socialist development. We defend unconditionally the degenerate workers states against imperialism. To open the road to socialism, we fight internationally to become a force for political revolution within these countries to smash bureaucratic tyranny and to create genuine workers' democracy based on soviets — workers' councils.

■ Imperialism

We support the struggles of op-

pressed nationalities or countries against imperialism. Within the oppressed countries, where such struggles are led by non-proletarian leaderships the tasks of communists to fight for leadership of the struggle renders our support or such forces conditional as well as critical.

■ Republicanism

In Ireland we defend the revolutionary nationalist Republican movement against imperialist backed repression. The Republican movement which stands at the head of the nationalist revolt repeatedly sets back the possibility of mobilising the masses by pursuing a strategy of guerrilla warfare without reference to the needs of the masses in struggle.

■ Permanent Revolution

As against their programme we fight for the strategy of *Permanent Revolution*, i.e. an action programme which links the present revolutionary-democratic struggle to the overthrow of both imperialism and Irish capitalism. We therefore fight politically against Republicanism, to bring the struggle under the leadership of the working class and a revolutionary communist party. We advocate the armed united front of workers, socialists and republicans as a tactic in the struggle. We fight to unite the majority of the Irish working class in the struggle for its own state power throughout the island. We fight for maximum unity in the struggle against capitalism with the Protestant working class, while not hiding from them our fundamental opposition to British imperialism.

■ Church & State

We fight for the most complete separation of Church and state, an end to church control of schools, hospitals and other social institutions. We fight against every confessional or sectarian expression in the workers' organisations.

■ Sexual Oppression

We fight against the oppression that capitalist society inflicts on people because of their race, age, sex, or sexual orientation; or on minorities such as the Travellers. We are for the liberation of women and for the building of a working class women's movement, not an "all class" autonomous movement. We are for the liberation of lesbians and gays from their special oppression.

■ Environment

We fight for the working-class action to keep the environment safe for human life against its destruction by the profit lust of capitalism or by bureaucratic Stalinist planning.

■ Internationalism

It is impossible to achieve socialism within a single national territory. The revolution must become international — its fundamental task is its own extension. Therefore, as well as building revolutionary parties, the workers need a revolutionary international. The last, the Fourth, collapsed into centrism between 1948 and 1951 after it failed to re-elaborate Trotsky's programme for the new world period.

■ New International

The Irish Workers Group is the Irish section of the *Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International*. We are pledged to fight the centrism of the degenerate fragments of the Fourth International (Militant, SWM, PD, LWR etc. in Ireland) and to refound a Leninist Trotskyist International through a process of revolutionary regroupment. We combine the struggle for a re-elaborated transitional programme with active involvement in the struggles of the working class — fighting for revolutionary leadership.

■ JOIN THE IWG

If you are a class conscious fighter against capitalism and imperialism and if you are an internationalist — join us!

"THE SOVIET army didn't start this war: they walked into the one we already had going." The PDPA member who said this was right.

A civil war was raging in Afghanistan before the Kremlin sent in its troops. Nine years on, and with the Soviet troops now withdrawn, that very same civil war is still going on. It is poised to enter its most decisive and bloody phase.

In 1980 when the Kremlin launched its invasion, the Irish Workers Group and our fraternal organization in Britain, Workers Power, recognized that the entry of Soviet troops had not changed the fundamental character of the internal Afghan civil war. In that civil war it was the duty of revolutionaries to make clear which side they supported, which side we would call on the international proletariat to actively solidarise with.

On one side of this war stand the motley crew grouped in the Mujahedin. They are led in the main by landowning tribal chiefs and divided between "moderates" who want to resist all change and the "hard liners" who compete with each other over precisely which century they want to take Afghan society back to.

Saudi money

Right now the Prime Minister of the provisional government established by the Mujahedin is the extreme reactionary Abdur Rasul Sayaf, a member of the Wahhabi sect backed by Saudi money. The Mujahedin chiefs are sanctioning the public stoning to death for women accused of adultery in their refugee camps. These are the "freedom fighters" that, astonishingly, the SWP call on workers to support.

A victory for these national "freedom fighters" would not result in liberation for the Afghan people. In fact, that "people" is divided along national lines already. The Mujahedin is mainly based on the most numerous, Pushtun, population group in Afghanistan. Their triumph would intensify the oppression of the other minority peoples such as Baluchis, Tazhiks and Uzbeks.

At the moment the coalition of forces within the Mujahedin is beset by tremendous frictions. So sharp are the divisions that the recent attempt to hold a conclusive general council of tribal chiefs (a *shura*) was wrecked by them. If they could overcome these divisions they would, as *Socialist Worker Review* has rightly said: "... probably produce a reactionary fundamentalist government well to the right of Khomeini. And this time it would be an American client." (February 1988)

Democratic reforms

Ranged against this armed imperialist backed reaction have been those elements supporting the regime of the PDPA. That regime was established in 1978 on a programme of democratic reforms. A Stalinist party, the PDPA, came to power in a coup that depended on its base in the officer ranks of the armed forces. It was, however,

AFGHANISTAN

SWM: Whose side are you on?

The Socialist Workers Movement in Ireland and its international leadership in the (British) Socialist Workers Party have greeted the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as "a blow against imperialism". The reactionary implications of this position flow from their belief that the USSR is an imperialist "state-capitalist" power.

a coup that was initially popular among Afghanistan's small working class—numbering 150,000 in the mid 1970s—and the teachers and students in the cities.

Initial attempts to implement a programme of reform from above immediately met with resistance from the landlords and mullahs. The regime announced its intention to abolish bride prices and arranged marriages, to create new secular schools and to carry through a land reform programme.

In a society where 40% of the population were landless and only 20% of those with land had enough for subsistence, the land reform measures were central to any programme for meeting the immediate needs of Afghan peasants and nomads. But the

tribal bounds.

In this situation the landlords were able to mobilize tribal structures in many areas, into "a reactionary vendee" (that is a popular mobilization for counter-revolutionary ends), as we described it in 1980.

The pressure of reaction, backed from the start by Pakistan and the USA, intensified the historic splits within Afghan Stalinism. Some, like Amin for example, wanted to increase the pressure of reform in order to make a direct transition from feudalism to "communism". Others, like Babrak Karmal and Najibullah, wanted to slow down the whole process of modernization.

The progressive side in the Afghan civil war was itself

gime.

However, the Soviet troops, in the context of a real, shooting, civil war, provided a degree of physical defence for those remaining forces committed to taking Afghanistan into the twentieth century. In other words, the invasion did not alter the fact that the civil war was between the forces of progress, even though led by Stalinists, and the forces of feudal reaction.

Yet, in 1980 the SWP/SWM immediately joined in the chorus demanding Soviet withdrawal. *Socialist Review* announced: "We say the Russian troops should get out of Afghanistan" (*Socialist Review* 1980:3) — and they've been saying so ever since.

What was the correct position to take on the Soviet

ership that had broken with, and learnt the lessons of, Stalinism, that the key to defeating the forces of reaction lay. We did not entrust that job to the Soviet Armed Forces.

For the SWP/SWM, though, there was never any alternative to Soviet withdrawal and a victory for Islamic reaction. Back in 1980 they declared that "we don't join in the hymns of praise in the press for the 'freedom fighters'". (*Socialist Review* 1980, No.3) Yet this never got in their way of actually urging their victory. As the SWP said more recently, the nature of the Mujahedin "shouldn't lead socialists to see Russia's defeat as anything but a boost for our side". (*Socialist Worker* 11 February 1989). As the towns are surrounded, as Kabul starves, as all those even faintly in favour of modernizing Afghanistan face a horrible death at the hands of reaction, *Socialist Worker* calls a Russian withdrawal "a welcome blow against imperialism". And:

"Socialists everywhere should celebrate it for that reason. But it will not lead to even a mildly 'progressive' government, and it will not bring peace." (*Socialist Worker Review* February 1989)

To call for Soviet withdrawal, with its inexorable logic of supporting those who were fighting to force that withdrawal and advising PDPA supporters and workers to join in that fight, could only open the way for a victory for reaction. It could only

for real proletarian internationalism.

We suspended the call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops until that moment when the Afghan workers and peasants could both effect that withdrawal and defend themselves against reaction. We warned of Soviet plans to carry out precisely the kind of treacherous withdrawal that has left the PDPA's militias surrounded and beleaguered. The SWP/SWM have been resigned to a right wing fundamentalist regime from day one.

Blinded

The SWP/SWM is blinded by the fact that it sees the USSR as an equal and identical imperialist power to the USA. As a result it doesn't care whether Afghanistan becomes what it expects it to become, an American client. Afghanistan as a US and, more importantly, Saudi client can be used as a base for an Islamic crusade against Soviet Central Asia. It can be used as a means of destabilizing Iran. But the Russian withdrawal is somehow "a welcome blow against imperialism". It is a funny blow that will lead to the strengthening of imperialist influence in the whole region if the Mujahedin come to power.

The SWP/SWM are further blinded by the fact that it doesn't really think anything progressive, or anyone progressive, can exist in as backward a country as Afghanistan. All socialists should welcome the withdrawal they say. And what will come after it? A "cycle of misery" can only continue we are told:

"It won't be broken until genuine socialist revolutions in more advanced countries provide the resources to overcome its economic backwardness." (*Socialist Worker* 4 February 1989).

The SWP/SWM urge us to celebrate the prospect that:

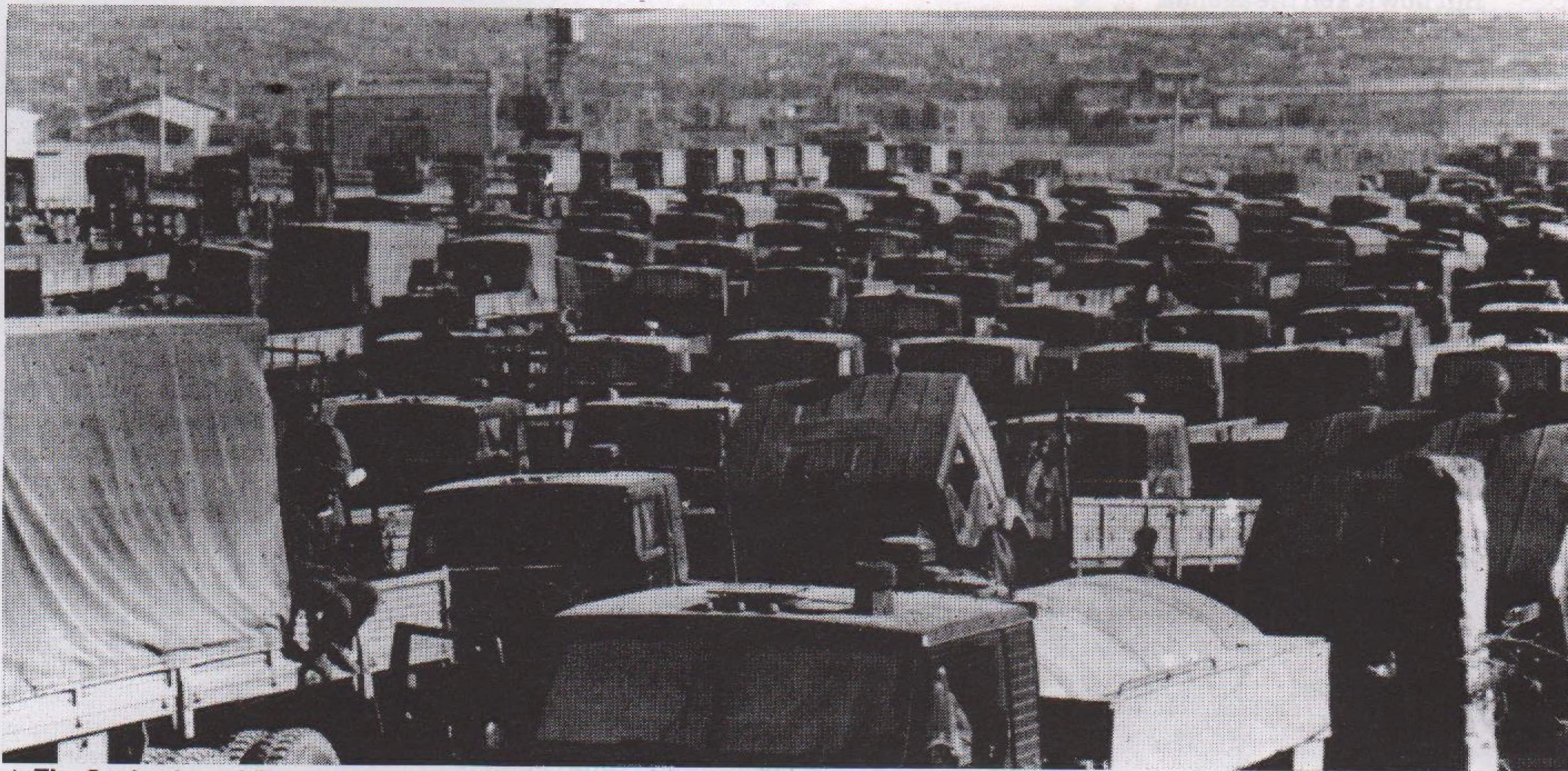
"The different ethnic groups will fight each other. The fundamentalists will fight the warlords and the warlords will fight each other." (*Socialist Worker Review* February 1989)

And the PDPA regime comes toppling down into the generalized misery and barbarism that the SWP/SWM have no alternative to. What a callous disregard for the fate of millions in Afghanistan and other backward countries.

Bankrupt

The message of this for any Afghan revolutionary is indeed a bankrupt one. It is to give up or get yourself slaughtered. It is a reactionary one that offers no means whatever of stemming the tide of reaction and fundamentalism in Afghanistan.

As true metropolitan chauvinists, blinded by their anti-Sovietism, the SWP/SWM condemn the defenders of Kabul, the PDPA militias, to death and destruction until the day the western workers take power and come to their rescue. This, as Lenin pointed out a long time ago in relation to backward Russia, is Menshevism. ■



▲ The Soviet Armed Forces prepare to abandon Kabul

Stalinist PDPA neither mobilised the rural masses in independent organizations to fight the landlords, nor did they provide the material means for implementing the reforms that they decreed from Kabul.

Decree number six abolished debts to richer farmers and landlords. But it did not touch the far more considerable debts of the peasants to the merchants and moneylenders. This was because the PDPA saw their "revolution" as a strictly anti-feudal one and did not wish to offend the powerful merchants of the bazaars.

Decree number eight placed a limit on land ownership. But it did not provide the peasants with the seed, implements and cash necessary to make land reform a reality. The majority remained tied to the landlords in sharecropping arrangements within the old

riven with armed strife that threatened to destroy it and its regime. It could not countenance workers' democracy to resolve these divisions, since such democracy would have threatened its own rule. Therefore, in classic Stalinist fashion, it resolved differences by bureaucratic-police measures and shoot outs.

It was in the context of the PDPA's own disarray that the USSR intervened militarily to preserve a buffer state for itself in Afghanistan. In so doing they stifled the PDPA regime and its supporters, forcing them to jettison even their pretence at carrying through a reform programme. The land reform was halted as a result of Soviet pressure, but this succeeded only in emboldening the reactionary landlords and leaving the peasants with no reason whatsoever to support the re-

presence in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of Soviet troops? From the very start we recognized that the Soviet troops were not there to defend, let alone extend, the democratic programme. Far from it. We recognized the troops were there to defend the Soviet bureaucracy's perceived self-interest in the region. That is why our first response to the intervention made it clear that:

"An independent force must be welded out of the tiny Afghan proletariat and the scattered forces of the poor peasants. That force must at every step jealously guard its independence from Karmal and the Soviet Armed Forces. Its aim must be the revolutionary overthrow of the Karmal regime and the Soviet occupying forces." (*Class Struggle*, June 1980)

It was in fighting for a lead-

weaken the chances of organizing the progressive forces to challenge both Stalinism and Islamic reaction, since it would pave the way for the physical destruction of those forces.

As long as the Soviet army afforded the progressive forces in the Afghan civil war a degree of immediate physical defence from the barbaric 'justice' intended for them by reaction it would be suicidal to turn one's guns on the Soviet troops.

This suicidal road is precisely what the SWP/SWM advocate for Afghan workers and peasants. But then again the SWP/SWM, content with making abstract propaganda, do not have to pay the price for such a policy. Their self-satisfied disregard for the concrete problems posed before the progressive forces in Afghanistan is a clear indication that this sect has no need

Trotskyist International

Issue No. 2

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LABOUR No Bans or Proscriptions!

DICK SPRING'S attempt to expel Militant from the Labour Party is not because they have been in any way hostile or damaging to the Party. It is because they are a convenient whipping dog on the left, victims of a long smear campaign originating in the capitalist media in Britain, and as such they are an easy first target for his drive to silence all opposition from the left of the Party.

This smear campaign first came to prominence in the London Times 9 years ago. In Britain, too, it served its purpose in the steady right-ward movement of the Labour leaders during which we saw the defeat of the Miners, the destruction of the GLC, the re-election of Thatcher for the third time and now Labour's passive response to the Poll Tax.

Dick Spring may pretend to be against Coalition for the time being, but a new Coalition is precisely what he has in view a few years down the road. And his new economic policies are precisely the kind of move to the right which he believes will help him cultivate electoral support from the higher-paid sections, the academics and

the media to help make that coalition possible.

He is determined to make sure, therefore, that there will be no seed-bed of organized opposition to Coalition within the party as there was from 1983-85. In that period he made his first scurrilous attacks on Militant in an attempt to divert the mass anger that was building up against his and Barry Desmond's involvement in starting the cuts. Even the two-faced Trade Union bosses Carroll and Attley at that time threatened to disaffiliate and Spring had to defer the witch-hunt.

But now it's on the agenda again, and this time thanks to Emmet Stagg & Co. who incited the "inquiry" into the Dublin West Branch and the anti-democratic standing down of Joe Higgins as election candidate. Twelve years ago a similar action led Noel Browne to abandon the Party. Joe Higgins has stayed to defend democratic principles in the Party.

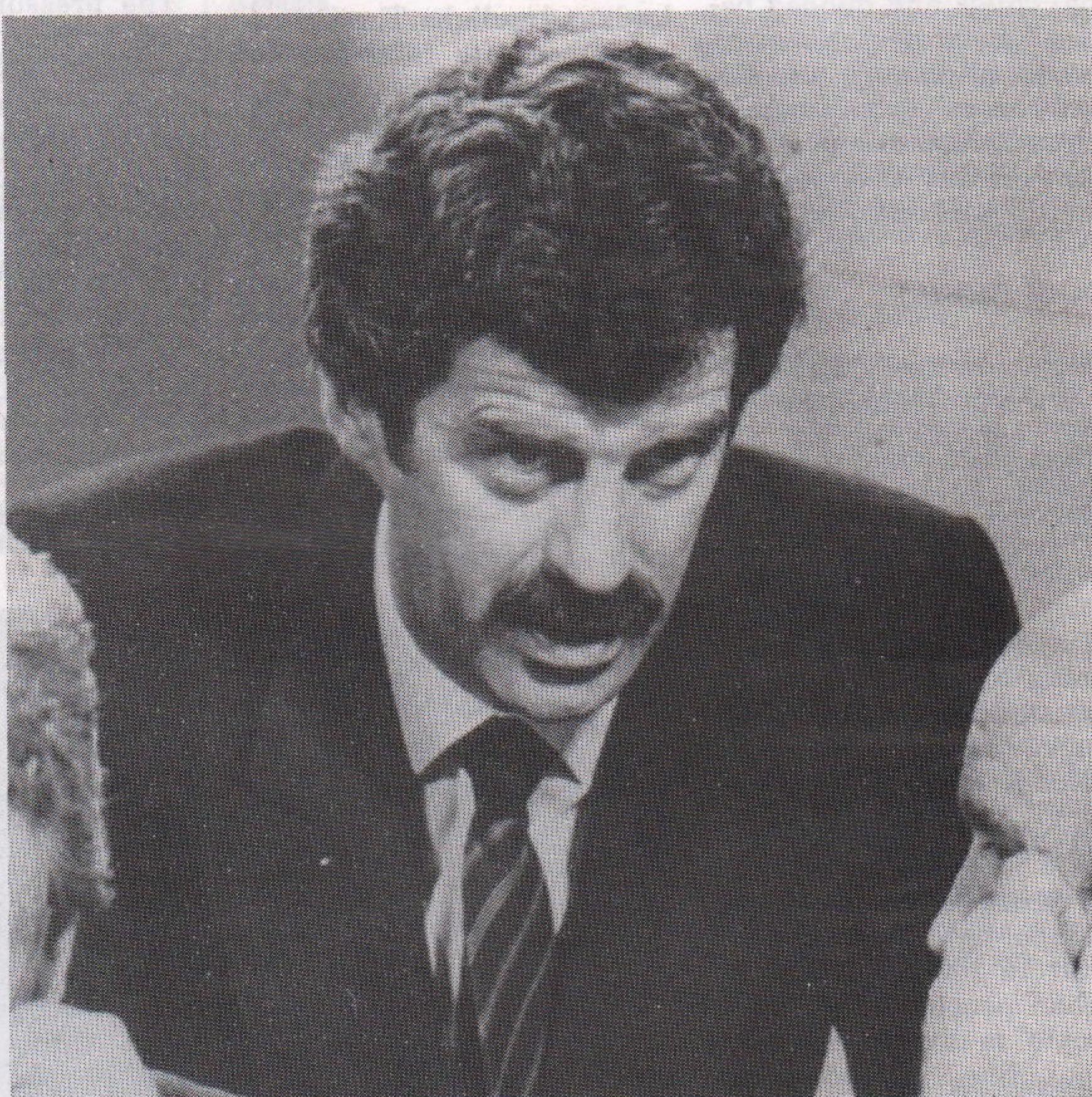
Increasingly Stagg is realizing the suicidal nature of his action from the point of view of the whole "left" in the Party. But rather than openly defend Militant in an honest and principled way his faction,

along with the practised cynics from the trade union bureaucracy, are backing the alternative motion for a witch-hunt "inquiry" into Militant.

Comrades! An inquiry was held by the Party into Militant in Dublin West. They were found guilty of *nothing*. Yet the branches which defended them were sacked and the candidate was not re-instated. That is the kind of inquiry which Spring & Co will again pack with their lackeys if this motion is carried. No honest democratic inquiry is possible under the rule of these people in the party! They have already proven it.

There's only one course of action for anyone with the slightest shred of socialist principle. Defend Militant. Defend elementary democratic rights of *all* currents of socialist ideas to be openly argued and published in the labour and Trade Union movement.

Fight all bans and proscription in the working class movement! Let the willingness to struggle for the needs of the working class be the only test of loyalty. By that test it is Spring, Desmond, Kavanagh and their fellow witch-hunters who should be expelled. ■



▲ The Witch-hunters General.

PHOTO BY DEREK SPEIRS/REPORT

FWUI BRANCH DEFENDS MILITANT

The AGM of No.15 Branch of the FWUI, which represents workers in the IDA, RTE, TCD, NIHE, the employees of ICTU and the political parties etc., called on the union Executive on March 1st "to mandate its delegates to Labour Party Conferences to oppose all motions which seek to discipline or expel members for supporting the Militant Tendency in the Party"

After a debate in which a Labour speaker called Militant a parasite on the Labour Party, the

motion was carried overwhelmingly by a ratio of 10 to 1. The attendance was about 60 of the most active representatives of the 2,200 members.

The FWUI president Tom Garry, however, intervened to try to rule that this motion could only have any relevance after the annual conference of the union in May. The members angrily told him, however, that it was their meeting and that they decided policy here for the branch both for now and for their annual conference delegates. The motion was one of several fought for by IWG members in the trade union movement to defend workers' democracy against attacks from the likes of Spring, Garry & Co.

The Militant tendency was initiated in Ireland by three members of the Irish Labour Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party in 1972—John Throne, Finn Geaney and Peter Hadden. With the aid of Militant in Britain two "Irish Editions" of the paper *Militant* appeared before June 1972 when the first edition of *Militant Irish Monthly* appeared, pledged to "cover every aspect of the struggle of the Labour movement against British Imperialism and their cohorts North and South of the Border" and specifically to fight the turn back to Coalition by the Labour Party.

Militant grew at its peak to just under 200 members and maintained its regular monthly paper for the past 16 years. With the discrediting and disappearance of the

NILP it organized the Labour and Trade Union Group in the North, to campaign there for a new trade-union Labour party. It won nominal support (but no more) in the Irish Labour Party for this project. It fought for and initiated the building of the Labour Youth organization. This it dominated almost totally until the Party leadership and the self-styled "Labour Left" around deputy Emmet Stagg combined to dislodge Militant, destroying most of the activist spirit of Labour Youth in the process.

In all of 16 years the founders and builders of Militant in the Irish Labour Party stubbornly and loyally clung to Labour despite the repeated attacks on the other anti- Coalition left groupings in the party which resulted in two major splits from Labour, in 1970 and again in 1977. While disciplinary action, suspensions and de-

selection of their election candidates were repeatedly used against the Left Liaison grouping in the seventies (Boucher, Merrigan, Noel Browne etc.), Militant never came into such open conflict with the party machine... until the present witch-hunt.

This utterly reactionary offensive against Militant bases itself upon the claim that they are an 'alien organisation' taking their 'orders' from 'outside', that they are a 'Trotskyist entryist conspiracy'. Nothing in their behaviour or utterances over the past 16 years, however, could sustain such a charge for a moment. As the IWG has pointed out time and again in polemics against Militant's positions throughout our existence, they have always put loyalty to the Irish Labour Party before any consideration of the independent fighting needs of the working class in the struggle for socialist

revolution in Ireland, a struggle in which we *must* build a revolutionary alternative which will end workers' illusions in Labour reformism.

The tragic paradox for Militant is that they *do* claim to be Trotskyist, to be Leninist, to be Marxist. It is precisely these claims, and Militant's links with similar tendencies abroad, that the Labour machine is determined to use to whip up a lynch mob that will ultimately help clear the road for a return to more coalition with the capitalist parties. This issue of *Class Struggle* examines the origins of these claims of Militant's, and test them against their utterances and their record.

Continued in a special feature inside this issue:
**The Politics of Militant,
Labour Reformism
Dressed up as Marxism.**